

WILLIAM SAMUEL BETHERS  
AND PHEBE HANNAH  
McMILLAN

(1862-1874, Heber Pioneer)



William Samuel Bethers was born to Zadock Stergeous and Sarah Collins Bethers on May 18, 1843, in Quincy, Adams County, Illinois. The family was acquainted with Joseph Smith.

When three years of age, he with his parents and family were with the 50-wagon train of Captain Joseph Outhouse in 1852, on their way to Utah. They settled in Provo on September 22, 1852. The mother and children were ill with measles while crossing the plains.

After developing a small farm at Provo, the father returned to Council Bluffs, leaving the mother and boys to care for the farm and endure pioneer hardships and the grasshopper plague. Later he returned and took his wife and sons back to Iowa.

When men were being recruited for the Civil War, Billie Bethers took volunteers to St. Joseph, Missouri, but Billie didn't enlist. He returned to Utah with his brother Mahlon, who went on to Nevada, while Billie came to Heber to live with his sister, Nancy Smith, and her husband, Ephraim Smith.

Billie served in the Indian wars and was a Blackhawk war veteran.

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As a young man, he freighted East with supplies, first with ox teams, then horses, bringing immigrants West. On one of these trips he saw a young girl, Phebe Hannah McMillan, camped with her family near Ft. Bridger. She was the oldest child of Daniel and Janett Davis McMillan and was born at Liverpool, England. Her parents were staunch Catholics until hearing the LDS gospel. Phebe and her sister, Mary Ellen, had come with their parents, in 1863, in the old packet ship "Cynosure," with the 125th company, organized by George Q. Cannon. After six long weeks of rough voyage, they arrived at New York City on October 4, 1863. Phebe walked all but one-half day of the distance to Utah.

At Ft. Bridger, too, she noticed Billie Bethers and both seemed to know they were meant for each other. They didn't become well acquainted till quite awhile later. Phebe became his wife on September 14, 1866.

They lived at Wanship and Heber while Billie worked on the railroad coming into Utah. In the spring of 1874, Billie took up a homestead near the mouth of Daniel Canyon and together they developed a fine farm, building three homes—first, a dirt-roof cabin, then a frame home, and finally a two-story brick home. He worked with Hiram Oaks in surveying a canal to bring water from Strawberry Valley to the farms of the settlers along Daniel Creek.

One winter he, with John Jordan and John Bethers, rescued a group of 25 people from the East, who were trying to cross Strawberry Valley in the deep winter snows and bitter cold. He and other families on the creek took care of these people until their wagons could be brought out in the spring and they could be on their way.

Billie purchased a grain binder, a horse-power and then a steam-power thresher, with which he and his sons did much custom work.

He was supervisor of the Daniel Canyon road sixteen years, when all such work was done with picks, shovels, teams, scrapers and wagons. He served as trustee and treasurer of the school board in the early history of Daniel, and on the jury when the county seat was in Provo.

He was second counselor to Bishop P. H. McGuire when the Daniel and Buysville

Wards were combined. He always was a faithful worker in Church organizations. He died October 7, 1926, at the age of 83.

Phebe always worked in the Church auxiliaries in Liverpool and in Utah. She was a kindly and generous person and taught her children to always be honorable and true to their faith. He had the gift of healing.

They were the parents of 14 children. Their second child, a boy, died when a year old. Another baby boy lived only one day.